

Message Text

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TO USIA WASHDC

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SUBJ: AREA DIRECTOR'S CALL AT MFA CULT DIV

REF: MOSCOW 1236, MOSCOW 1277

1. EUROPEAN AREA DIRECTOR SHIRLEY FEBRUARY THREE CALLED
AT MFA CULT DIV (CHURLIN, AZAROV), ACCOMPANIED BY
P&C COUNSELOR AND CAO, FOR GENERAL REVIEW OF RELATIONS
AND DISCUSSION OF CURRENT ISSUES.

2. SHIRLEY CITED JANUARY SIX DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO MFA
PROPOSING US BICENTENNIAL FILM FESTIVAL AND ASKED
THAT REPLY BE CONSIDERED URGENT MATTER BECAUSE
OF TIME NEEDED FOR ARRANGEMENTS WITH PRIVATE INDUSTRY
FOR FILMS AND WITH CINEMA PERSONALITIES FOR SEMINAR
TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH FESTIVAL.

3. IN REGARD TO PHOTOGRAPHY USA EXHIBIT NEGOTIATIONS,
SHIRLEY MADE CASE FOR LENINGRAD OPENING AND FOR
SOVIET AGREEMENT WITH EMBASSY PROPOSAL FOR THE CLOSED
CITY, KUYBUYSHEV, IN LIGHT OF IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP

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WITH USSR. SHIRLEY ALSO ASKED THAT SIX CITIES BEING

CONSIDERED FOR EXHIBIT BE VIEWED TOGETHER AS PACKAGE TO FACILITATE EFFICIENT NEGOTIATIONS. IN THIS APPROACH, CONTRACT WOULD INCLUDE CONTINGENCY CLAUSE THAT CONDITIONS FOR SECOND THREE CITIES WOULD BE DRAWN ACCORDING TO PROVISIONS FOR FIRST THREE CITIES SUBJECT TO COMPLETION OF 1977/79 CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM AGREEMENT. THIS WOULD AVOID RE-NEGOTIATING CONTRACT.

4. CHURLIN RESPONDED WITH THREE POINTS:

A. SOVIETS ARE READY TO NEGOTIATE DETAILS OF FIRST THREE CITIES PROVIDED FOR IN CURRENT AGREEMENT, AND HAVE AUTHORIZED CONCRETE DISCUSSIONS WITH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

B. SOVIET POSITION ON CLOSED CITIES IS THAT REGULATIONS PROHIBIT EXHIBITIONS BY ALL FOREIGNERS IN THESE CITIES.

C. SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAS STRICT RULES THAT ONLY EXHIBITS AUTHORIZED BY FIRM INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT CAN BE PLANNED UNDER CENTRALIZED REGULATIONS. NO SOVIET ORGANIZATIONS CAN HOLD TALKS WITHOUT SUCH SIGNED AGREEMENT.

5. REGARDING FINAL POINT, CHURLIN MADE OFFICIAL PROPOSAL ON BEHALF OF SOVIET GOVERNMENT THAT CONTRACT ON FIRST THREE CITIES BETWEEN EMBASSY AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE INCLUDE FOLLOWING FORMULATION:

"THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF THE USSR TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN SIDE ON ITS WISH TO DISPLAY THE EXHIBIT "PHOTOGRAPHY-USA" IN THREE ADDITIONAL CITIES OF THE USSR IN 1977 AND WILL CONSIDER IT IN THE PROCESS OF THE TALKS ON THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM FOR 1977-1979."

6. SHIRLEY COMMENTED THAT ABOVE FORMULATION WOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. REGARDING CLOSED CITIES, SHIRLEY ASKED THAT QUESTION BE RESERVED AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT US AND SOVIET SIDES EXPLORE FURTHER, IN VIEW OF RECENT RECORD OF RESOLVING DIFFICULT ISSUES, WHETHER SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND. P&C COUNSELOR CITED US INVITATION TO SOVIET EXHIBIT "SCIENTIFIC SIBERIA" TO TWO CLOSED US CITIES, AND SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH THIS A UNILATERAL US INITIATIVE, IT WAS RELAXATION OF PRESENT RESTRICTIONS AND ANY RECIPROCAL ACTION ON SOVIET SIDE WOULD BE FAVORABLY NOTED IN U.S.

7. CHURLIN POINTED OUT THAT US INSISTENCE ON TWO ISSUES PLACES CHAMBER IN DIFFICULT POSITION, AS THEY CANNOT NEGOTIATE WITHOUT INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT. ALTHOUGH WE ASSUME EXHIBITS WILL CONTINUE IN FUTURE, CHURLIN SAID, ISSUES PLACE CHAMER IN IMPASSE.

8. SHIRLEY MADE FINAL STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF RECIPROCITY ON CLOSED CITY QUESTION TO SHOW MUTUAL DESIRE TO BE FORTHCOMING ON PROBLEMS. HE ASKED THAT ISSUE BE KEPT OPEN WITH OPTION TO DISCUSS FURTHER.

9. P&C COUNSELOR THEN PRESENTED NON-PAPER ON GOSKONTSEK'S FEBRUARY TWO INSISTENCE ON TELEVISION TAPING FEE FOR ROY CLARK SHOW, WHICH WAS IN VIOLATION OF CONTRACT AND WHICH RESULTED IN FAILURE TO MAKE NETWORK TAPE (SEE SEPTTEL).

10. CHURLIN SAID HE APPRECIATED EMBASSY'S INFORMING HIS OFFICE, BUT MATTER IS FOR MINCULT AND GOSKONTSEK. P&C COUNSELOR NOTED MFA'S PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY CONCERNING ALL ELEMENTS CULTURAL AGREEMENT AND THAT GOSKONTSEK'S ERRATIC PERFORMANCE HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN DETAIL DURING DECEMBER ANNUAL REVIEW. THOUGH EMBASSY WOULD SPEAK DIRECTLY AND AT GREATER LENGTH WITH MINCULT AND GOSK WE HOPED MFA WOULD PLAY A ROLE IN PREVENTING RECURRENT DIFFICULTIES. CHURLIN AGREED "LOOK INTO IT." CHURLIN THEN SHOWED VISITORS LARGE FOUR-COLUMN ARTICLE ON ROY CLARK SHOW IN FEBRUARY 3 PRAVDA, "THE COUNTRY'S CENTRAL NEWSPAPER," TO DEMONSTRATE THAT TV TAPING PROBLEM NOT SOVIET EFFORT MINIMIZE PUBLICITY FOR ROY CLARK. EARLIER PRESS HAD BEEN GOOD, AND THERE WOULD BE MORE ARTICLES TO COME, CHURLIN ADDED.

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11. AFTER STRESSING IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL EXCHANGES AND UNDERLINING SOVIET WARM WISH TO HAVE THEM CONTINUE IN EXPANDED FORM, CHURLIN SAID THAT HE WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SHIRLEY'S PRESENCE TO DRAW HIS ATTENTION TO TWO UNPLEASANT INCIDENTS REGARDING SOVIET GROUPS IN THE USA.

A. ON JANUARY 27 IN NEW YORK, "HOOLIGANS" RELEASED MICE ON STAGE AND THREE LEAFLETS DURING RECITAL BY PIANIST SEVIDOV. THIS OCCURRED DURING BOTH HALVES OF CONCERT, SHOWING LAXITY OF AUTHORITIES IN PREVENTING SUCH INCIDENTS. AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN HAS PROTESTED TO STATE DEPT.

B. THE MFA WAS AWARE THAT SIMILAR UNFRIENDLY INCIDENTS ARE BEING PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY 4 PERFORMANCE OF SOVIET CIRCUS. THESE INCIDENTS CAUSE SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT SECURITY OF THEIR ARTISTS IN US, PARTICULARLY DON COSSACK CHORUS, SOON TO APPEAR. CHURLIN ASKED SHIRLEY TO CONVEY SOVIET CONCERN TO APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF US OFFICIALS AS WELL AS SOVIET HOPE THAT SOVIET PERFORMERS CAN MEET SAME CONDITIONS AND RECEPTION AS US PERFORMERS HERE.

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12. SHIRLEY RESPONDED THAT WHILE HE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE TWO INCIDENTS, HE WISHED TO ASSURE MR. CHURLIN THE US WOULD OF COURSE REGRET ANY OCCURRENCE WHICH WOULD INTERFERE WITH SOVIET-US CULTURAL EXCHANGE. HE IMPRESSED ON CHURLIN THAT, WITHIN THE SCOPE OF US LAWS AND CUSTOMS, THE COMPETENT AUTHORITIES IN THE US TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE STEPS TO AVOID SUCH EVENTS.

13. CHURLIN WENT ON TO RAISE TWO SPECIFIC ISSUES WHICH, IN HIS WORDS, COULD HAVE NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON BILATERAL CULTURAL RELATIONS IN GENERAL: COMMERCIAL FILM EXCHANGES AND THE CIRCULATION OF SOVIET LIFE MAGAZINE -- ISSUES WHICH HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED IN DETAIL IN THE PAST.

14. SHIRLEY RESPONDED THAT, IN REGARD TO FILM DISTRIBUTION, SINCE THE US HAS NO CENTRAL OFFICIAL AGENCY WITH WHICH USSR COULD DEAL, COMMERCIAL RELATIONS MUST BE MAINTAINED WITH PRIVATE FILM DISTRIBUTORS. ON SOVIET LIFE, SHIRLEY NOTED THAT USIA HAD EARLIER PROPOSED MEETING BETWEEN NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STAFF AND SOVIET LIFE REPRESENTATIVES TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE MEANS INCREASING SL CIRCULATION, BUT THE SOVIET EMBASSY HAD NOT YET ACTED ON OUR SUGGESTION.

15. IN CONCLUSION, CHURLIN MADE CLEAR SOVIET EVALUATION OF OVERALL CULTURAL RELATIONSHIP AS DEVELOPING QUITE WELL IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL SITUATION IN OUR RELATIONS, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY SECRETARY KISSINGER'S RECENT MEETING WITH SOVIET LEADERS.

16. SHIRLEY EXPRESSED RECIPROCAL SENTIMENT, AS REFLECTED IN RECENT EXCHANGE REVIEW TALKS, AND THANKED MFA FOR COOPERATION EXTENDED TO EMBASSY ON CULTURAL PROGRAM. SHIRLEY CONCLUDED ON NOTE THAT ATMOSPHERE FAVORED CONTINUED EXPANSION OF USEFUL PROGRAMS.
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